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**Aesop Rock**

**Bazooka Tooth**  
(Definitive Jux)

On his new record, Aesop Rock manifests himself as Bazooka Tooth to retaliate against the Def Jux media backlash and other incubators of bother. A feeling of dread permeates this Brooklyn MC's discography, but *Bazooka Tooth* is his first attempt at throwing punches. The battery-acid barbs are tossed over mostly his own thick, stuttering, El-P-ish beats. Though Aesop does falter slightly on "Super Fluke" and there's a novice beat here and there, the overall effect of the album is hypnotic. —Robby Sexton

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**Alias**

**Muted**  
(Anticon)

Alias makes dark, goth-inspired hip-hop fused with elements of electronica. Absent are the traditional samples found on previous efforts, and in their place are keyboards, guitars, drums and synths. The Notwist's Markus Acher lends his voice to "Unseen Sights," but for the most part *Muted's* mic is muted—this is instrumental music suitable for a hip-hop/electro dinner party. Typical of the genre, the layman is going to find several songs feel similar, but after a few listens *Muted* doesn't disappoint. —Marc Lemoine

group lies in core members Avey Tare and Panda Bear, who create piano-based pop songs, acoustic psychedelia, noise freak-outs and shambling electronic visions. Remember when The Flaming Lips could barely play and made a weird, primitive racket that was a little bit scary? It's like that, only played by the new, hi-tech Flaming Lips in a lo-tech fashion, if that makes sense. That still doesn't quite do the group justice, as the Collective's approach is something like sound sculpture at times, truly pushing things into new realms, creating some of today's most stunning music. —Jon Pruett

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**The Assistant**

**We'll Make The Roads By Walking**  
(Alone)

Cymbal-smashing, guitar-banging belligerence woven together with intricate instrumentation makes up The Assistant's third and final album, *We'll Make The Roads By Walking*, which continues to call for compassion and positive change while throwing more Molotov cocktails onto the tracks than one can count. However, compared to their first two records, it's filled with more love and less hate. Leigh Sabol gets so emotional she starts to sound like Rainer Maria's Caitlin De Marrais in "An Afternoon At The Badlands" and "My Last Potential Self-Destruction." An album that all angry peacekeepers can appreciate. —Travis Anderberg

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**Azure Ray**

**Hold On Love**  
(Saddle Creek)

Azure Ray craft drafty chapels of sound for Corn Belt ghosts on their third full-length. Storms of strings pirouette with electro patters in the desperate "New Resolution," while "If You Fall" and the most beautiful track, "Sea Of Doubts," conjure up life's bittersweet symphony. At times, Orenda Fink and Maria Taylor seem lost in Omaha's winter—five of the 12 songs mention "cold"—but their Cocteau Twins-esque coos are far from precious, and instead nod to the horizon: "Tomorrow a new point of view/ These bright lights will bend to make blue/ And this can all look new to you." —Nathan Turk

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**Carla Bozulich**

**Red Headed Stranger**  
(DiCristina Stair Builders)

Former Ethyl Meatplow and Geraldine Fibbers front woman Carla Bozulich has completed a peculiar triptych with her inspired cover of Willie Nelson's 1975 concept album. It starts with Nelson's own classic collection, continues through The Fibbers' underrated 1995 LP, *Lost Somewhere Between The Earth And My Home*, and lands squarely in the middle of this record. The album is an honest, heartfelt tribute—not just to Nelson, but to the strong tradition of country music overall. Bozulich's record is made even more powerful by the fact that over half of Nelson's original consisted of covers. The integrity of the songs shines through the dusty generations, creating an LP that functions as a beautiful homage while standing tall on its own. —Scout

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**Casiotone For The Painfully Alone**

**Twinkle Echo**  
(Tomlab)

It's easy to imagine Casiotone's sole member, Owen Ashworth, hiding out in an apartment with only a pile of battery-powered keyboards for company. His music is a stark mixture of datalike beats and melancholy chords, with a scratchy voice hovering alone over the transmission. Most of the songs are periscope views into the lives of lonely characters who find solace in art and music. "Toby, Take A Bow" chronicles the world's biggest Smiths fan, replete with half a dozen references to Morrissey lyrics. On "Half Ghost," Ashworth sums it up when he sings, "At least a song won't cheat/ At least a song won't leave." —Owen Otto

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**Coheed And Cambria**

**In Keeping Secrets Of Silent Earth: 3**  
(Equal Vision)

The new installment of singer/guitarist Claudio Sani-



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**Animal Collective**

**Spirit They're Gone, Spirit They've Vanished/Danse Manatee**  
(Fat Cat)

This double set gathers the first two releases from New York's Animal Collective. The essence of the

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**Atmosphere**

**Seven's Travels**  
(Rhymesayers/Epitaph)

Ever since *Lucy Ford*, Slug has been indie hip hop's favorite basket case, spitting tales of alienation, sex and scraping by with the peerless wit of a consummate smart-ass. Since then, his records have gotten darker and, frankly, less listenable. Both "Suicide-girls" and "Cats Van Bags" find him hollering on top of beats that sound like skidding tires on glass. With the exception of one of the best bad date songs ever ("Shoes"), *Seven's Travels* is a bitter, plodding affair. —Terry Sawyer

AMAZING	♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣
GREAT	♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣
GOOD	♣ ♣ ♣ ♣
OKAY	♣ ♣ ♣
WEAK	♣ ♣
SHIT SANDWICH	♣

choz's sci-fi interpretation of the Bible finds Coheed And Cambria taking a step in the direction of crazy pop, which puts them in a class of their own. Metal riffs and the theme of death are sprinkled generously throughout *In Keeping Secrets Of Silent Earth: 3*, and there's even a demonic voice in the title track. The whole thing is much different than 2002's *The Second Stage Turbine Blade*, but give it a chance, and don't forget to stick around for the bonus track.

—Joe Wilson

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**Ben Davis**  
*Aided & Abetted*  
(Lovitt)

Getting to know Ben Davis by listening to *Aided & Abetted* might be difficult. With 16 guest musicians and six producers, the title is an accurate description and Davis' voice ultimately gets lost in the muddle. He does, however, craft solid, dark pop songs, and the layers of sounds he gets from all these contributors make *Aided & Abetted* unique. Davis may not have a singular voice, but the music he creates more than makes up for it.

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**Kevin Devine**  
*Make The Clocks Move*  
(Triple Crown)

Kevin Devine of Miracle Of '86 plays quiet, folky torch songs on his second solo outing, *Make The Clocks*

just how exactly you were going to follow up your last album, the glorious, sloppy-as-all-hell collection of covers called *Ultraglide In Black*. I mean, I know that onstage your dual bass, dual-drums, all-soul collective rocks with the beat that's sweet and the jive that's alive, but your previous set of originals, *HornDog Fest*, was fucking unlistenable. I needn't have worried. Recorded by what must roughly be the 185th lineup of The Dirtbombs, *Dangerous Magical Noise* is a sweaty rock monster fashioned from T-Rex's strut, Buzzcocks' snot and Jimi Hendrix's gigantic cock. The Bombs have finally learned how to play their instruments and, apart from a couple of misfires, have created the kind of album that makes me want to screw a dozen groupies and then drive a Cadillac into a swimming pool. Thank God albums like this don't come along too often.

—Thomas Patterson

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**The Disease**  
*Dyslexic Experts In Perverse Psychology*  
(Alone)

At a time when even Kraftwerk themselves releasing an album seems a bit cliché, it's hard to imagine four guys from South Carolina having much impact on the music world by fusing a classic electronic sound with offbeat modern-hardcore chaos. However, for anyone who can't get enough of The Locust or would like a serving of Botch with their Rapture, this collection of out-of-print and unreleased songs may find a place in your heart. When the band rids itself of most things techno and gets down to business, as on "I

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**Drive-By Truckers**  
*Decoration Day*  
(New West)

Following up their critically heralded double album, *Southern Rock Opera*, Alabama's Drive-By Truckers have returned stronger than ever. The drastic changes in their career and their personal relationships almost killed them, but somehow they completed yet another incredible roots rock album. Head Trucker Patterson Hood knows how to tell one hell of a story, and on *Decoration Day* he does so in the form of upright epiphanies as well as dark, moody ballads—that Eagles influence emerges more than a few times. Despair is the common theme among these songs—as Skynyrd's music once told us, Southern life ain't all it's cracked up to be. But you can sure make it sound a lot better with a guitar, a woman by your side and a bottle of whiskey.

—Shannon McCarthy

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**Erase Errata**  
*At Crystal Palace*  
(Troublemaker Unlimited)

If you're familiar with Erase Errata's debut LP, *Other Animals*, then you aren't in for any groundbreaking developments in the band's formula. Much like its predecessor, *At Crystal Palace* serves up quick blasts of the same jagged 'n' angular guitar raucousness that's becoming a bit calculated. It's a shame, really; the band seems capable but unwilling to break out of the post-punk hullabaloo that it clearly had mastered by its first album. Maybe the level of potential placed on the band was too high; hopefully Erase Errata will eventually put the doubts to rest.

—Paul Burrell

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**Feable Weiner**  
*Dear Hot Chick*  
(Doghouse)

Bursting onto the scene with all the talent of a wet sandwich, Feable Weiner's debut album, *Dear Hot Chick*, is a shameless attempt to be as Weezer-like as possible, but unfortunately they lack the talent and sense of humor to pull it off. The music is sometimes listenable, but the burning sensation that the lyrics leave behind is hard to shake. Feable Weiner's feeble attempts at being funny are sorely off beam, *Dear Hot Chick* is too juvenile to be sarcastic, and too clueless to be taken seriously.

—Rachel Turner

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**Feed**  
*Feed*  
(Pants On Fire)

Sometimes all a band needs is what's right in front of it. On their debut LP, Seattle's Feed sound like four people playing in a room, and this straightforward approach works well for them. With the help



*Move*, which contains beautiful, crisply produced arrangements that alternate with stark, skeletal numbers. Opener "Ballgame" features brittle acoustic guitar, which glides over this quavering, bilious rumination: "When you realize it's a pattern and not a phase/ that's ballgame." The bittersweet "Spilling Up Christmas" illustrates the generous ethos at the heart of the record, as Devine muses, "You're the lotto I hit/ You're the star at the top of the tree," over a keen, supple melody. While *Clocks* has some obvious antecedents, Elliott Smith's *Either/Or* in particular, the passion with which the performances are delivered sets it apart, creating a uniformly good and occasionally exceptional album.

—John Everhart

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**The Dirtbombs**  
*Dangerous Magical Noise*  
(In The Red)

Oh, Mick Collins, you magnificent gold-lamé wearing bastard, I could kiss you. See, I was concerned about

Want A Moustache. Damn It," it's downright brutal.

—Ben Hedstrom

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**Do Make Say Think**  
*Winter Hymn Country Hymn Secret Hymn*  
(Constellation)

With their fourth record, Toronto outfit Do Make Say Think return to some of the more chaotic sounds found on 2002's *& Yet & Yet*. The instrumental quintet's expansive space jams and trance-inducing melodies are getting craftier by the album, but the basic ingredients remain the same—guitars, bass and drums sprinkled with horns, strings and some good old-fashioned knob-twiddling. The resulting short list of long songs floats between ambient lulls, jazzy funk and searing energy. *Winter Hymn Country Hymn Secret Hymn* contains some scary stuff but is ultimately a gorgeous work of strange beauty.

—Dan Bergevin